

MARINE SAFETY MANUAL

CHAPTER 8: RECORD MANAGEMENT FOR U.S. MERCHANT MARINERS

A. Records Management.....	8-1
1. Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD)/Sea Service Files.	8-1
2. License And Certificate Records.....	8-1
3. Security Of Coast Guard Forms.	8-1
4. License Stubs.	8-2
5. Exam Room Logs.	8-2
6. Transferring Seaman's Files Between RECs.	8-2
7. Freedom Of Information Act Requests (FOIA).....	8-2
a. Non-Releasable Information.....	8-2
b. Releasable Information.....	8-3
c. FOIA Requests.	8-3
8. Shipping Articles.....	8-3
9. Official Logbooks.	8-3
10. Preparation Of Fingerprint Records.	8-3
a. Applicant Fingerprint, Form FD-258.....	8-4
b. Authenticity Of Information.	8-4
c. Radio Officers.....	8-5
d. Questionnaire for National Security Positions SF-86 (formally Coast Guard Intelligence Agency Check Request, Form CG-2765).....	8-5
B. License Information System (LIS).....	8-5

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A. Records Management.

This section provides guidance on the maintenance of license, certificate of registry, STCW certificates and document files by Regional Examination Centers (RECs). Additional guidance can be found in COMDTINST M5212.12, Paperwork Management Manual.

1. Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD)/Sea Service Files.

Seamen documentation files are held at the REC for a period of one year from the date of the last transaction and then destroyed. All original applications shall be forwarded to Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center (NMC-4A) at the time the document is issued. When license and MMD transactions are completed at the same time, on the same application, the original application should be retained in the license file at the Regional Examination Center (REC) and a copy sent NMC-4A with a note that the original application is at the REC.

2. License And Certificate Records.

Files should be sent to the Federal Records Center (FRC) seven years after the last transaction, e.g., license renewal, upgrade, and should first be sanitized by removing examination answer sheets and other extraneous material. The following are examples of file contents that should be forwarded to the FRC:

- a. Applications and all supporting documents;
- b. Letters of service;
- c. Records of examinations; and
- d. Canceled license(s) and STCW certificates, if the mariner does not want them. Return the canceled license(s) and STCW certificates to the mariner when possible.

1. Security Of Coast Guard Forms.

Each REC shall maintain a record of licenses and Certificates of Registry forms, Certificates of Discharge (Form CG-718A), and all other controlled forms. Each REC shall maintain a log indicating who received the forms at the REC, the individual who received the forms for use, the date distributed for use, and signature of the recipient. Before signing the receipt, the custodian shall carefully check the control numbers of the documents being delivered to determine that none are missing. The bulk supply on hand should be securely packaged, kept in a safe or locked cabinet at all times, and periodically reviewed. The available supply for day-to-day use shall be checked daily against the control record. If at any time blank license/Certificate of Registry forms, Certificates of Discharge, or other controlled forms are discovered missing a unit investigation shall begin immediately. A complete report of the circumstances shall be made promptly following the investigation to Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center (NMC-4A), via the district commander. A complete audit of all blank forms should be completed:

- a. Semiannually;
- b. When staff members with access to the forms change; and
- c. At any other time the OCMI deems it necessary.

1. License Stubs.

These records are to be maintained at the REC for a period of seven years, then destroyed at the REC.

2. Exam Room Logs.

These logs should be retained one year then destroyed at the REC.

3. Transferring Seaman's Files Between RECs.

Files shall be forwarded by rapidraft letter requesting a receipt signature. The rapidraft should indicate who requested the file be transferred and how the request was made, e.g., phone, E-mail, letter. The file should be sent certified mail, return receipt requested. The originating REC will place the rapidraft and the signed return receipt in the now empty mariner's file folder. The contents of mariners' files may be transferred on a telephone request from the applicant or another REC.

4. Freedom Of Information Act Requests (FOIA).

When determining what information is releasable from a mariner's file under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), use the FOIA Manual, COMDTINST M5260.2, the FOIA officer, and the district legal staff. Be conservative in your determination, as additional items may be released under appeal; however, the file's custodian may be held personally accountable for violations of the mariner's privacy. Note that FOIA denials can only be made by designated officials, normally the district commander.

a. Non-Releasable Information.

- (1) The following information must be withheld under exemption (b)(3) in 5 U.S.C. 552 because it is required by other statutes to be protected:
 - (a) The fact that the mariner holds an MMD; and
 - (b) All information contained on the Merchant Mariner's Document, Merchant Mariner's Document application or in the MMD record (manual or electronic). forward all requests for information in MMD records to Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center (NMC-4A).
- (2) The following information must be withheld under exemption (b)(6) in 5 U.S.C. 552 as a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy:
 - (c) Information regarding the arrest and conviction record, including Section IV, Narcotics Record of the License/MMD application, Form CG-719B and answers to the questions in blocks 20 and 21 of the old license application, Form CG-866;
 - (d) Exam scores and employment records, including lists of discharges and letters of service as well as employment history listed on the application; and
 - (e) Present address and home phone number.

b. Releasable Information.

- (1) Type and grade of license and certificate of registry, including endorsements.
- (2) Issue number.
- (3) Date and port of issue.

c. FOIA Requests.

Requests must be in writing, even if the only information desired is that which is on the face of the license.

1. Shipping Articles.

Shipping articles are submitted to Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center (NMC-4A) for review and filing. The shipping articles are maintained at Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center (NMC-4A) for three years then transferred to the FRC in Suitland, MD for an additional 60 years.

2. Official Logbooks.

The Official Logbooks are permanent records. They are submitted to the nearest OCMI for review by the Investigation Department, maintained at the Marine Safety Office for six months, then transferred to the nearest FRC for 60 years. After 60 years the Official Logbooks are sent to the National Archives Regional Center for permanent storage. A record of all official logbooks and their location must be maintained by the submitting office.

3. Preparation Of Fingerprint Records.

To comply with FBI policy and procedures governing criminal record checks, a classifiable form FD-258, Fingerprint Card, must be submitted for an original license, certificate of registry, Merchant Mariner's Document and 10% of renewable licenses/MMDs and new endorsements of licenses and MMDs. Only one set of fingerprint cards needs to be submitted when the applicant applies for a license and a Merchant Mariner's Document at the same time or within 6 months of a previous application. The REC should keep a second fingerprint card on file for one year to submit in case the first fingerprint card is rejected. Particular attention must be given to obtaining legible prints. The majority of rejections are due to one or more fingers not being rolled fully, the charts being smeared as the finger is being removed from the chart, or use of too much or too little ink. Any fingerprint that is smudged or otherwise illegible will be rejected. In addition, the FBI's system will reject any card containing any discrepancy which may include a blank entry or even a middle initial inserted in the place of a full middle name. The form FD-258 must have the proper ORI code number DCCG 00000, US COAST GUARD, WASH DC. A supply of form FD-258 with the proper code may be obtained by calling Commandant (NMC-4A). Fingerprint Cards, form FD-258, shall be submitted to Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center (NMC-4A) a minimum of once each week.

a. Applicant Fingerprint, Form FD-258.

To obtain the needed information for a criminal record check, compliance with the instructions on the back of form FD-258 is essential. Personnel must ensure that the following information is provided, either typed or legibly printed in blue or black ink.

- (1) Applicant's Name. (First, Middle, Last, Suffix)
- (2) Social Security Number.
- (3) Date of Birth.
- (4) Place of Birth.
- (5) Your No. OCA. This block must be completed with the alpha code for each REC and the applicant's social security number. The fingerprint card can NOT be processed without this code. The alpha codes are as follows:

A - Anchorage	T - Memphis
B - Baltimore	M - Miami
D - Boston	N - New Orleans
C - Charleston	Y - New York
G - Guam	P - Portland
I - Honolulu	F - San Francisco
H - Houston	S - San Juan
J - Juneau	W - Seattle
K - Ketchikan	L - St. Louis
E - Los Angeles/Long Beach	O - Toledo

EXAMPLE: For Memphis, OCA Block would read: T123456789

- (6) REC Location. The space entitled "Employer and Address" should contain the name and address of the Regional Examination Center where the application is submitted.
- (7) Reason For Fingerprinting. The reason for fingerprinting (original license, license as radio officer, certificate of registry as staff officer or MMD) must be typed or legibly printed in the space designated "Reason Fingerprinted."
- (8) Race. The space for "Race" will be completed with one of the following abbreviations only:

AI - American Indian	AN - Alaskan Native
A - Asian	PI - Pacific Islander
B - Black	H - Hispanic
W - White	

b. Authenticity Of Information.

If for any reason you doubt the information provided by the applicant, a letter stating the basis for doubt (including all pertinent details and justification) shall be referred to Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center (NMC-4A) for decision.

c. Radio Officers.

When an applicant has been approved for a license as radio officer and subsequently, within the five year renewal period, applies for an original MMD endorsed "See License as Radio Officer," a second set of fingerprints need not be obtained or submitted to the Commandant.

d. Questionnaire for National Security Positions SF-86 (formally Coast Guard Intelligence Agency Check Request, Form CG-2765).

Form SF-86, Questionnaire for National Security Positions, replaces the previous form CG-2765. The SF-86 must be executed for all non-U.S. citizens born outside the U. S., attached to the application and fingerprint forms, and forwarded to Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center. The NMC will forward the completed SF-86 to Immigration and Naturalization Service for processing and verification of an alien's legal entry into the U.S. Form SF-86 is available on Form Filler. Paper copies may be ordered from regular supply sources.

The applicant must complete Parts 1-14 (page #s 1-5), and sign the bottom of page 9. In addition, page 10 (Authorization For Release Of Information), must also be completed and signed.

B. License Information System (LIS).

All license, COR, and MMD transactions are now recorded in a central computer system, the Merchant Mariner Licensing and Documentation System (MMLD). Therefore, LIS cards are no longer used.